



News for Immediate Release
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Draft Salton Sea Restoration Report Released:

California Resources Agency Announces Alternatives, Launches 90 Day Public Comment Period on Long-Term Future of California's Largest Lake

Sacramento -- Secretary for Resources Mike Chrisman today released a draft Salton Sea Restoration Report that includes eight alternatives for sea rehabilitation and a no action option. The release of the study opens a 90 day public comment period on the alternatives and how best to restore the Salton Sea ecosystem.

"The release of this study is a milestone in protecting the future of the Salton Sea and an important first step in finding the best long-term solution," said Secretary for Resources, Mike Chrisman, who also serves as chairman of the 32 member Salton Sea Advisory Committee. "We hope to build consensus among the region's residents and interested parties and move forward with a plan that will benefit this generation and generations to come."

The release of the report, known as the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (Draft PEIR), follows two years of intensive scientific study and input taken during 30 public meetings. The alternatives take into account agricultural, recreational and economic issues with the flexibility to address changing conditions at the sea. The aim is to restore habitat, keep air quality from being further degraded and protect water quality in the Salton Sea.

During the 90 day comment period, public workshops will be held in the Salton Sea region and throughout the state. Following the public comment period, the Secretary for Resources will select a preferred alternative that will be presented to the state Legislature for approval and funding.

The process to restore the Salton Sea began in 2003 with the Quantification Settlement Agreement to reduce southern California's dependence on Colorado River water. Under the terms of the agreement, inflows to the Salton Sea will be reduced, hastening its ecological degradation. To mitigate these effects, state legislation established a Salton Sea Advisory Committee to help guide the secretary for resources in developing the best restoration and

mitigation plan for the next 75 years.

The Salton Sea is located in Riverside and Imperial counties and is California's largest lake, 35 miles long and 15 miles wide. It was formed in 1905 after an accidental levee break from the Colorado River allowed water to fill a deep desert basin. Birds and other wildlife flourished in the newly formed habitat, and came to depend on it as other wetlands quickly disappeared. The sea has gradually become less hospitable as salts that flow into the basin and dissolve have no natural outlet. The sea is 30 percent more saline than the ocean, creating a hostile habitat for wildlife and very poor air and water quality.

For more information on the Salton Sea Ecosystem Restoration Program, refer to www.saltonsea.water.ca.gov. The Web site provides a schedule of public workshops, information and related documents. For further questions, contact Dale Hoffman-Floerke, Chief of Colorado River and Salton Sea Office at (916) 651-7052.

The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs.

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